A COMPARISON OF COSTS OF TRUCKING AND TRAILING LAMBS FROM SUMMER RANGE TO SHIPPING POINT

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Early this year a number of questionnaires were sent to forest supervisors of Region 4 for obtaining certain information from range sheep operators on comparative costs of trucking and trailing lambs from summer range to shipping point in the late summer and early fall months. Approximately 50 of these were completed and returned to the Regional office, and this report is a summary and analysis of this information.

For purpose of analysis and comparison these records were sorted into three groups as follows: (1) operators with a trail route requiring less than 5 days; (2) operators with a trail route requiring from 5 to 10 days; and (3) operators with a trail route requiring more than 10 days. Comparative information is presented for these three groups of records in tables 1, 2 and 3.

Column 1 of these tables shows the number of ewes run by the operator. Column 2 shows the number of days of trailing required to reach the shipping point from the summer range. Column 3 shows the number of hours required to truck a load of lambs from summer range to shipping point. Column 4 shows the distance which the lambs were trucked. Column 5 shows the advantage of trucking over trailing in shrinkage per lamb. This question on shrink was phrased in terms of the difference and we do not have the information on total shrink for either trailing or trucking.

Column 6 shows the percent of death loss in lambs from trailing. Column 7 shows the cost of extra feed and labor required for trailing the lambs to shipping point. Column 8 shows the total trail cost per lamb including loss and shrink. A value of 8 cents a pound has been placed on shrink and death loss. Column 9 shows the trucking cost paid per lamb. All of these operators hired their trucking done. Column 10 shows the saving in cost per lamb by trucking. The figures in this column were derived by subtracting the figures in column 9 from the figures in column 8.

Column 11 shows the operators' response to the question "Do you receive a better price for the lambs which are trucked as a result of better condition and grade of the lambs". Column 12 shows the number of years which operator has been trucking his lambs.

Forty-four of the 50 records were complete enough to use in this summary. Twelve of these are in the first group, 24 in the second group, and 8 in the third group. It will be noted that the saving in cost per lamb by trucking averaged 20 cents for the first group, 30 cents for the second group, and 26 cents for the third group. This means a saving in cost amounting to $200 to $300 per thousand lambs trucked. A comparison of the summaries of these three groups of records shows the greatest advantage for the

group with the 5 to 10-day trail distance. The figures on shrink show that the first group with an average trail of 4 days has a shrinkage figure which is not exceeded materially by the operations with the longer trails. The shrink for the second group is one-half pound greater than for the first group and is 1 pound greater for the third group than for the first. Death loss, however, is a negligible factor for the short trails and is a factor of considerable importance for trails of 5 days and longer.

The cost of added labor and feed for trailing is small for the short trails but becomes progressively more of a factor. As the trail length increases it amounts to three times as much for group 3 as it does for group 1. However, the trucking cost on the longer hauls, particularly those over 100 miles, increases more rapidly, proportionately, than do the trail costs. This appears to be the main reason why the saving in cost is less for group 3 than group 2.

No definite data are available on the price and quality advantages resulting from trucking. It will be noted that in the first group 80 percent of the replies were to the effect that better quality and price were an important consideration in trucking instead of trailing. In the second group this percentage drops to 65 and in the third group to 50 percent. However, these replies indicate that there is a material price difference in favor of trucking, particularly where the truck haul is not unusually long.

A good many of the records for the longer hauls made reference to bruising and shrinkage of the lambs from trucking. The indications are that the better quality and grade of the lambs which are trucked may be a very important consideration for the short and intermediate length of hauls. There were two or three of the questionnaires which indicated a market price difference of 25 cents to $1.00 per hundred weight as a result of trucking lambs. This part of the information is too sketchy to show anything definite, but it indicates the possibility that the quality and price factor might be greater than the factor of saving of cost.

The questionnaire contained a question designed to bring out the operator's opinion on price advantage due to reaching the market earlier in the season as a result of trucking. Only one of the operators had an opinion on this, but it may be a question of some importance particularly for the operator with a long trail in reaching the shipping point.

Table 1 - Sheep Operators With a Trail of Less Than 5 Days

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
No. of ewes operated	No. of days by trail	No. of hours by truck	Distance trucked (miles)	Shrink saved by trucking (lbs. per lamb)	Trailing loss (%)	Cost of added labor & feed for Trailing (per lamb)	Total trail cost per lamb including loss and shrink at 8¢ per lb.	Trucking cost (per lamb)	Saving by trucking (per lamb)	Received better prices by trucking	No. of years trucking practiced
1000	4		50	2½	1	$.08	$.34	$.10	$.24		1
1200	4	3	75					.10		yes	2
1200	4	3½	66	4	none	.08	.40	.11	.37	yes	2
2000	4	1	24	1	none	.07	.15	.10	.01	no	4
2300	4	2	35	4		.02	.34	.25	.11	no	9
2500	4	3	65	4	1	.15	.53	.20	.33	yes	1
2700	3	1½	20	3				.06			3
3250	4	2	30	4	none			.09		yes	4
5500	4	3	50	6	none	.01	.49	.12	.37	yes	5
5700	4		42	2½				.20		yes	4
6000	3	3	40	3						yes	3
10000	3	2	30	3	none	.01	.25	.08	.18	yes	5
Summary											
Average	4	3	45	3		.04	.32	.12	.20	8 yes	
High	4	3½	75	6		.15	.53	.25	.37	2 no	
Low	3	1	20	1		.01	.15	.06	.01		

Blank spaces indicate part of data missing from the record.
Summaries at bottom of tables are based upon all records from which data available.

Table 2. - Sheep operators with a trail of 5 to 10 days.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
No. of ewes operated	No. of days by trail	No. of hours by truck	Distance trucked (miles)	Shrink saved by trucking (lbs. per lamb)	Trailing loss (%)	Cost of added labor & feed for trailing (per lamb)	Total trail cost per lamb including loss and shrink at 8¢ per lb.	Trucking cost (per lamb)	Saving by trucking (per lamb)	Receives better prices by trucking	No. of years trucking practiced
1100	7	3	65	9	3	$.22	$1.12	$.14	$.98	yes	4
1100	5	2	40	7	2	.10	.78	.11	.67	no	5
1200	10	4	35	8	2	.15	.93	.12	.81	yes	7
1350	5	2	40	6	1	.08	.62	.15	.47	no	7
1700	5	2	55	5		.07		.12		yes	3
1800	7	2	64	5	1	.08	.54	.15	.39	yes	2
2400	6		42	3	2	.03	.36	.20	.16	yes	4
2400	7	3	50	4		.03		.14		yes	3
2600	6	4	48	5		.04		.20		yes	7
2950	6	6	70	none	2	.30	.42	.15	.27	no	5
3000	5	3	40	2		.12		.20		yes	10
3200	8	3	35	none	none	.10	.10	.25	none	no	1
4000	10	3	50	5	1	.01	.46	.18	.28	yes	15
4100	8	4	45	3				.15		yes	5
6000	7	6	55		½	.07		.15		no	2
6000	8	4	50		1	.06		.15		yes	2
6000	8		85	none	½	.17	.20	.17	.03	no	4
7200	5	3	37	none	3	.05	.23	.13	.10	no	6
7800	9	2	28		½	.01		.14		yes	8
9000	7	2	20	3	1	.01	.31	.10	.21	yes	6
10000	6		45	3	1	.02	.32	.20	.12	no	2
11000	10	5	85	6	1	.05	.59	.22	.37	yes	1
17000	10		75	none		.01		.14		yes	5
28000	9	3	32	3	1	.01	.31	.18	.13	yes	5
Summary:											
Average:	7	3	50	3½	1-1/3	.07½	.45	.15	.30	16 yes	
High	10	6	85	9	3	.30	1.12	.25	.98	8 no	
Low	5	2	20	0	0	.01	.10	.10	0		

Table 3. - Sheep operators with a trail of more than 10 days.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
No. of ewes operated	No. of days by trail	No. of hours by truck	Distance trucked (miles)	Shrink saved by trucking (lbs. per lamb)	Trailing loss (%)	Cost of added labor & feed for trailing (per lamb)	Total trail cost per lamb including loss and shrink at 8¢ per lb.	Trucking cost (per lamb)	Saving by trucking (per lamb)	Receives better prices by trucking	No. of years trucking practiced
600	12	6	150		2			$.25		no	4
1000	12	6	105	4	1¼	$.08	$.48	.35	$.13	no	5
1200	15	8	80	4½	1	.12	.54	.25	.29	yes	4
1375	11		50	4½				.20		yes	8
1600	11	4	80	3½		.20		.18		no	2
2000	16	8	90		1	.08		.35		yes	1
2400	15	7	120	2	½	.10	.30	.18		no	2
7000	11	7	160	4	2	none	.45	.35	.10	yes	2
Summary:											
Average	12	7	105	4	1-1/3	.12	.52	.26	.26	4 yes	
High	16	8	160	4½	2	.20	.54	.35	.29	4 no	
Low	11	4	50	2	½	.08	.30	.18	.10		